

What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus comprising:

first and second members movable one relative to the other;

an element mounted in one of said members which initiates an action in the apparatus;

a detector mounted in the other of said members which responds to the proximity of and detects the intensity of interaction with said element; and

a inhibitor mounted in said one of said members which selectively inhibits the intensity of interaction between said element and said detector;

said inhibitor, said element and said detector cooperating in determining the physical proximity of said members one relative to the other and enabling an effective intensity of interaction between said element and said detector when said members are in close proximity one to the other.

2. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said element is free of any necessity of application of an external source of power.

3. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said detector responds to one of an electromagnetic wave, an electric field, a magnetic field, corpuscular radiation, and an acoustic wave.

4. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said element is a magnet, said detector is a Hall effect switch responsive to imposition of a magnetic field, and said inhibitor is a coil generating a magnetic field opposing the field of said magnet.

5. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said element is a light source, said detector is a photoelectric device, and said inhibitor is a light shield.

6. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein one of said members is the lid of a portable computer system having a display therein and the other of said members is the body of a portable computer system having a keyboard therein.

7. Apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said inhibitor is responsive to a coded driving signal and further wherein said inhibitor, said element and said detector cooperate in determining the physical proximity of said members one relative to the other by detection of the coded driving signal.

8. Apparatus comprising:

a portable computer system body having a keyboard therein;

a portable computer system lid having a display therein;

a coupling joining said body and said lid together for movement thereof one relative to the other between open and closed positions; and

a proximity detection subsystem which determines whether said body and said lid are in the closed position, said subsystem comprising:

an element mounted in one of said body and said lid which initiates an action in the apparatus;

a detector mounted in the other of said body and said lid which responds to the proximity of and detects the intensity of interaction with said element; and

a inhibitor mounted in said one of said body and said lid which selectively inhibits the intensity of interaction between said element and said detector;

said inhibitor, said element and said detector cooperating in determining the physical proximity of said body and said lid one relative to the other and enabling an effective intensity of interaction between said element and said detector when said body and said lid are in the closed position one to the other.

9. Apparatus according to Claim 8 wherein said element is a magnet, said detector is a Hall effect switch responsive to imposition of a magnetic field, and said inhibitor is a coil generating a magnetic field opposing the field of said magnet and further comprising a microprocessor operatively connected to control excitation of said coil.

10. A method comprising:

detecting reception of a signal interaction normally indicative of initiation of a system operation;

selectively inhibiting response to the detected reception; and

detecting the physical proximity of two members coupled for movement one relative to the other and determining the appropriateness of initiating the system operation from close proximity of the members.

11. A method comprising:

monitoring the output of a detector mounted in one of two members coupled for movement one relative to the other;

detecting an output normally indicative of initiation of a system operation;

selectively inhibiting response to the detected reception; and

detecting the physical proximity of the members and determining the appropriateness of initiating the system operation from close proximity of the members.

12. A method according to Claim 11 wherein the selective inhibition of response occurs in response to detection that the members are withdrawn one from the other.

13. A method according to Claim 11 wherein selective inhibition of response is discontinued in response to detection that the members are in close proximity one to the other.

14. A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium and code stored on the medium which is effective when executing in a computer system to cause the system to perform the steps of one of Claim 10.

15. A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium and code stored on the medium which is effective when executing in a computer system to cause the system to perform the steps of one of Claim 11.